

# Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Feedback Policy

**Date Amended: June 2024**

**Date of Ratification: 17.07.24**

**Next Review Date: July 2026**

Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Feedback are all integral parts of the Plan, Do, Review cycle of effective learning and vital to the delivery of Quality First Teaching.

The Great Teaching Toolkit (2020) states:

*‘The quality of teaching is hugely important to the outcomes of young people, and great teaching can be learnt’*

and quotes (Wiliam, 2018),

*Raising the quality of teaching within existing schools is probably the single most effective thing we could do to promote both overall attainment and equity.*

We use [Great Teaching Toolkit \(2020\)](#) as an evidential basis for this policy, it presents a simple, evidence-based, four-dimensional, narrative around effective teaching

Great teachers will intentionally take action to instil and develop each of the core 4 dimensions in their learning spaces:

- 1. Understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt.**
- 2. Create a supportive environment for learning.**
- 3. Manage the classroom to maximise opportunity to learn.**
- 4. Present content, activities and interactions that activate their students’ thinking.**

This policy aims to:

- Encapsulate our approach to, Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Feedback.
- Ensure they are effectively combined to support and maximise strong student progress.

Our expectation is that there will be a constant effort from all leaders to support colleagues in improving learning and teaching via collaborative professional development and subsequent reflection and evaluation.

We aim to develop great teachers and teaching, thus ensuring our colleagues are best placed to deliver our curricular intent by facilitating great learning for all students and delivering significant, value-added impact, therefore improving student life chances.

The Great Teaching Toolkit (2020) explains,

*Great teaching must be defined by its impact: a great teacher is one whose students learn more. It cannot be defined by compliance to a particular set of practices, however soundly based, nor by the demonstration of specific skills – nor, even, by the possession of teacher mindsets or understandings. Teaching is complex.*

## Learning

We know that effective learning is a result of effective teaching, facilitated by great teachers.

Great teachers know that durable and flexible knowledge depends on connecting ideas together, creating and modifying schemas, based upon mastery of foundational disciplinary knowledge and supporting the knowledge of these schemas to be retrieved, recalled, and used in familiar and then less familiar situations to solve problems of increasing complexity.

A schema is a cognitive structure that enables information to be organised and stored in the long-term memory. Schemas are very powerful for learning; allowing individual bits of knowledge to be 'chunked' together into an overarching principle or concept, or for a series of procedures to be combined into a single 'script', and hence processed as a single element, reducing cognitive load.

Prior knowledge is structured in schemas and the process of acquiring new knowledge consists of accommodating it into existing or modified schemas and making connections between them (CESE, 2017; Sweller, 1994). Hence, learning depends on the connections that learners make between new ideas and what they already know. Great teachers activate that prior knowledge, reinforce it, and connect new ideas to it.

Our aim is to develop appropriate student schemas deliberately and intentionally.

Great teachers also understand that evidence from both cognitive load theory (CLT, Sweller et al., 1998, 2019) and direct instruction (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Stockard et al., 2018) supports the importance of good explanations. In presenting new material, teachers should be mindful of the limitations of working memory and pay attention to the 'cognitive load' the material presents to students by:

- Limiting the number and complexity of new elements.
- Breaking complex ideas or procedures into smaller steps.
- Helping students to assimilate concepts into – and extend – existing schemas.
- Minimising extraneous, irrelevant, or distracting input, from either content or environment.

Great teachers recognise that achieving challenging learning objectives requires hard thinking and generating this hard thinking requires complex tasks. We know that some students experience barriers to learning and participation in learning due to SEND needs. Students often require scaffolding for these complex tasks: beginning with a simplified or limited version of the task to make it manageable. Learners begin with different levels of readiness and varying capacity for learning new material. Therefore, it is vital that teachers have a knowledge of individual students' needs, including SEND, and how best to meet these needs by structuring learning appropriately and making necessary adaptations.

Great teachers require all students to achieve success (Hattie, 2012). Scaffolding provides necessary initial support, but the desired aspirational destination remains the same. Lower-starting and / or SEND students may take longer and need more help to get there, but the job of teachers is to 'disrupt the bell curve', not just to preserve it (William, 2018). Scaffolding should be gradually removed as ideas and procedures become secure and fluent: by the end, those complex tasks should be accessible to all, evidencing the deliberate development of the intentional schema. In a small minority of classes there may be an individual whose additional learning needs cannot be met through adaptive teaching alone. In these instances, teachers should seek to develop appropriate levels of knowledge to allow individual progression and success.

Great teachers understand the literacy demands of their subjects and understand that developing student's literacy levels increases their students' chance of success in their subjects. ([EEF Improving](#)

Literacy in Secondary Schools 2016). Teachers should specifically teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their respective subjects, therefore developing disciplinary literacy.

To facilitate this, teachers should seek to embed the 7 key recommendations from EEF Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools 2016 report:

1. Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum.
2. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.
3. Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts.
4. Break down complex writing tasks.
5. Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject.
6. Provide opportunities for structured talk.
7. Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students.

## Teaching

Great teachers:

### 1. Understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt.

This means teachers should have deep and fluent knowledge and flexible understanding of the content they are teaching and how it is learnt, including its inherent dependencies. Teachers should have an explicit repertoire of well-crafted explanations, examples, and tasks for each topic they teach. Leaders should support teachers to develop and extend this repertoire.

Our great teachers should have:

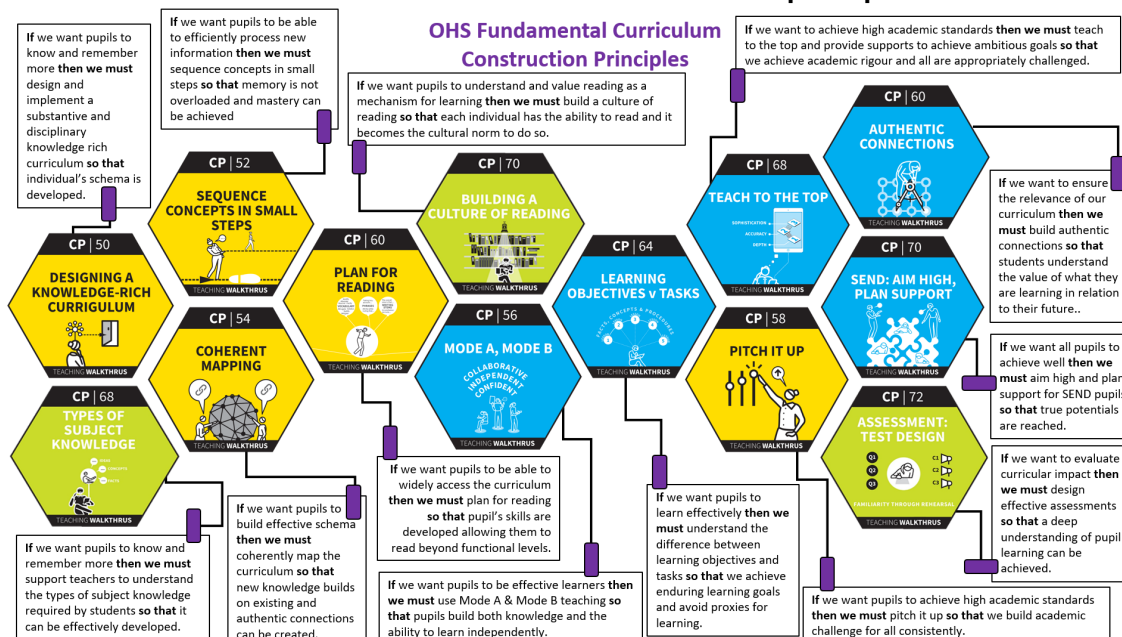
1.1 A deep and fluent knowledge and flexible understanding of the content they are teaching.

1.2 A well-developed knowledge of the requirements of curriculum sequencing and dependencies in relation to the content and ideas they are teaching.

1.3 A robust knowledge of relevant curriculum tasks, assessments and activities, including their diagnostic and didactic potential. Teachers generate varied explanations and multiple representations/analogies/examples for the ideas they are teaching.

1.4 Knowledge of common misconceptions, and sticking points in relation to the content they are teaching and make use of effective strategies to include students from all starting points and help them overcome these learning hurdles.

## Connected cluster: Fundamental curriculum construction principles



## 2. Create a supportive environment for learning.

This means teachers create a supportive environment that is characterised by relationships of trust and respect between students and teachers, and among students. It is one in which students are included, motivated, supported and appropriately challenged. It is characterised by students having a positive attitude towards their learning.

Our great teachers should:

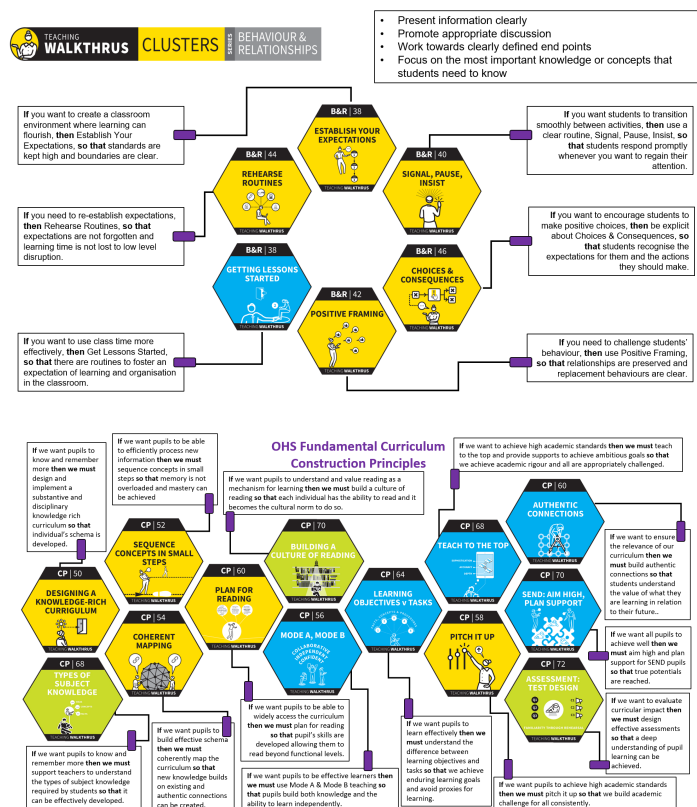
2.1 Promote interactions and relationships with all students that are based on mutual respect, care, empathy, and warmth; avoiding negative emotions in interactions with students; are sensitive to the individual needs, emotions, culture, and beliefs of students.

2.2 Promote a positive climate of student-student relationships, characterised by respect, trust, cooperation and care.

2.3 Sustain learner motivation through feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

2.4 Create a climate of high expectations, with high challenge and high trust, so learners feel it is okay to have a go; encouraging learners to attribute their success or failure to things they can change.

## Connected cluster: Behaviour & relationships, Fundamental curriculum construction principles



### 3. Manage the classroom to maximise opportunity to learn.

This means teachers, individually and collectively, effectively manage their classrooms: appropriately managing the behaviour in line with our behaviour policy; ensuring class activities promote effective learning.

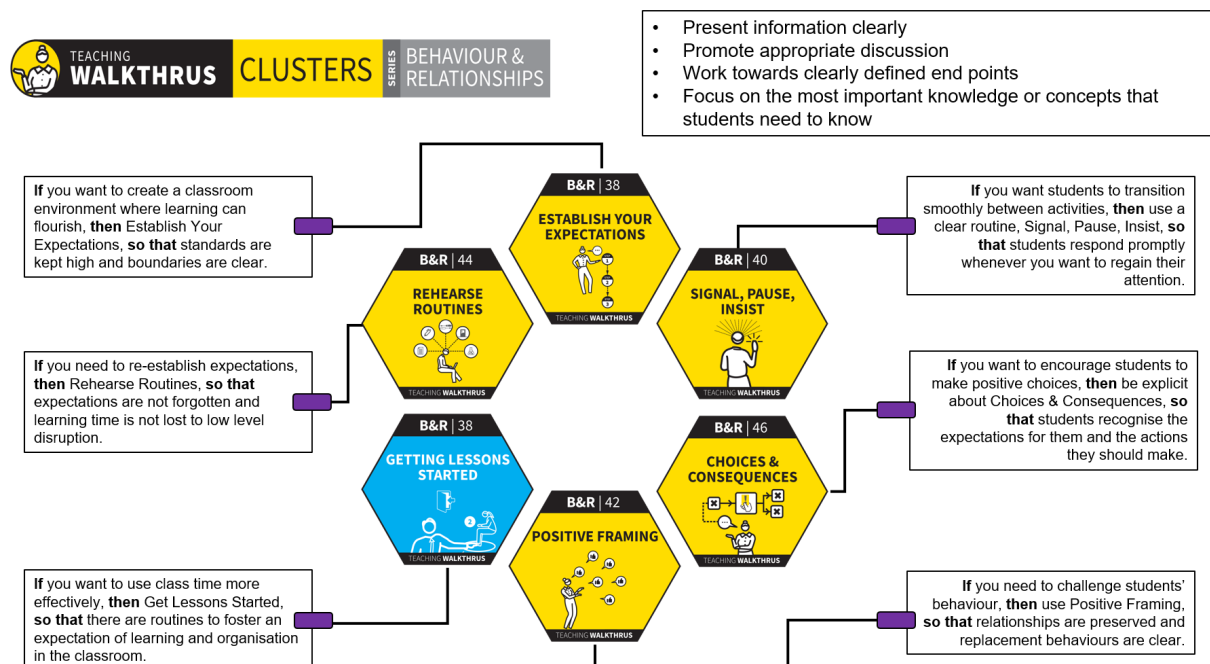
Our great teachers should:

3.1 Manage time and resources efficiently in the classroom to maximise productivity and minimise wasted time (e.g., starts, transitions); giving clear instructions so students understand what they should be doing; using (and explicitly teaching) routines to make transitions smooth.

3.2 Ensure that rules, expectations, and consequences for behaviour are explicit, clear, and consistently applied.

3.3 Anticipate, prevent (where possible), and respond to potentially disruptive incidents; reinforcing positive student behaviours; signalling awareness of what is happening in the classroom and responding quickly and appropriately.

### Connected cluster: Behaviour & relationships



### 4. Present content, activities and interactions that activate their students' thinking.

This means teachers specifically and deliberately get students to think hard about the material to be learned. We understand that student learning can be invisible, slow, and non-linear and know we must seek repeated opportunities to evaluate the extent to which desired learning has been achieved.

Our great teachers will do this by:

4.1 Structuring: Giving students an appropriate sequence of learning tasks; matching tasks to students' needs and readiness; scaffolding and supporting to make tasks accessible to all, gradually removing them so that all students succeed at the required level.

4.2 Explaining: Presenting and communicating new ideas clearly, connecting new ideas to what has previously been learnt (and re-activating/checking prior knowledge); supporting with concise, appropriate, engaging explanations and models with multi-channel presentation, using examples (and non-examples) appropriately to help students understand and build connections; modelling/ demonstrating new skills, language, written forms or procedures with appropriate scaffolding and challenge; using worked/part-worked examples.

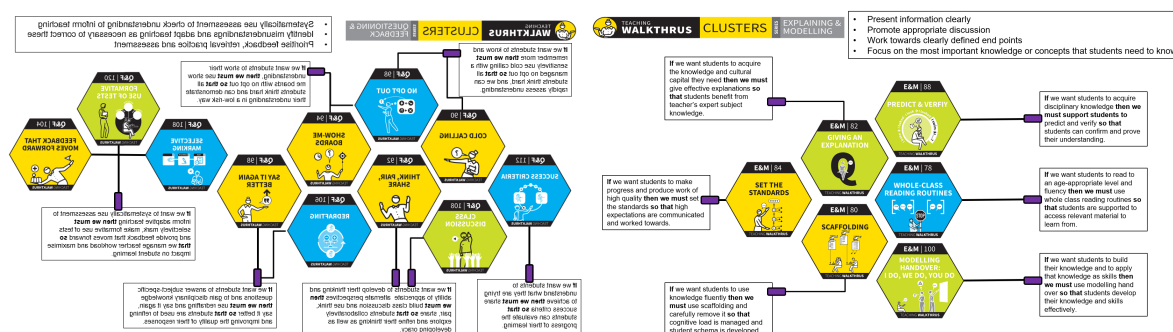
4.3 Questioning: Using questions and dialogue to promote elaboration and connected, flexible thinking among students; using questions to elicit student thinking; getting responses from all students; using high-quality assessment to evidence learning; interpreting, communicating, and responding to assessment evidence appropriately.

4.4 Interacting: Responding appropriately to feedback from students about their thinking/knowledge/understanding and give actionable feedback to guide student learning.

4.5 Embedding: Giving students tasks that embed and reinforce learning; requiring practise until learning is fluent and secure; ensuring that once-learnt material is reviewed/revisited to prevent forgetting.

4.6 Activating: Helping students to plan, regulate and monitor their own learning; progressing appropriately from structured to more independent learning as students develop knowledge and expertise.

## Connected clusters: Explaining & modelling, Questioning & feedback, Practice & retrieval



Staff can read the [Great Teaching Toolkit \(2020\)](#) to gain further information relating to each of the key elements of effective teaching describe in this policy.

To provide colleagues with a more structured approach to specific techniques aligned to each of the key four dimensions we have collaboratively designed core technical clusters using the Teaching Walkthrus. Our core clusters are designed as a guide for teachers to have a suggested core set of pedagogical techniques (appendix 1) that will underpin the delivery of inclusive Quality First Teaching for all. Teachers are not expected to exclusively use these techniques, they act as a foundational basis for colleagues to use alongside their own methodologies.

All teachers are issued with appropriate books and have access to the web-based resources to enable them to appropriately master these core techniques. Professional development support is offered annually to teachers to help further develop their teaching. Early Career teachers are supported to initially embed the Early Career Framework before transitioning into developing using this policy as a guide.

Our quality assurance procedures seeks to triangulate information from a wide range of sources to evaluate the impact of teachers and teaching. This information is used to derive subject area improvement plans and contribute from the classroom key priority development areas for the whole school which are subsequently reflected in the annual whole school development plan.



## **Assessment**

Great teachers understand assessment comes in many forms and should be seen as a tool to elicit insights into students' thinking. They understand that what has been learnt is not the same as what has been taught (Nuthall, 2007) and that assessment is the only tool we have to make the former visible and plan and adapt teaching to respond to what assessment tells them.

Assessment is used to define a student's current attainment relating to a clearly defined set of criteria. It helps to answer the question, "What do we know about the student's learning?"

Whatever form an assessment takes, great teachers understand the amount of information it provides, how much weight it carries and what inferences and decisions it can support.

We view the purpose of assessment as twofold:

- Primarily to inform future teaching and learning by clarifying starting points and current attainment as well as relevant strengths and weaknesses.
- Secondly to inform parents and carers about the progress made by their child.

Key attributes for all assessments:

- Planned so that teachers and students know when they are going to take place.
- Clearly defined in terms of what the assessment is measuring and how the assessment is related to the curriculum that has been studied.
- Accessible to all students, with adaptations to ensure accessibility made, where appropriate.
- A range of assessment methods and evidence should be made use of, across the curriculum.
- All assessments should include a clear explanation of relevant tiers of success criteria that can be interpreted by students. A teacher should be able to communicate the differences between success criteria at different outcome points.
- A range of possible outcomes should be able to be achieved, without ceiling or floor effects.
- Reliable, in terms of the repeated administration of an assessment should produce consistent, replicable results.
- All assessments should be free from bias.

Individual teachers and subject leaders should undertake regular reviews of assessment outcomes.

Early intervention should be used where possible to avoid students falling behind. Where students do fall behind, they should initially be provided with appropriate subject level support to help them make the learning gains needed to catch up.

Subjects should have in place a method for ensuring consistency of assessment judgements between different teachers across different groups within the same year and different year groups.

It is the responsibility of the subject leader to ensure that appropriate assessment schemes, assessments and moderation processes are in place and are regularly reviewed for efficacy.

Assessment will be used in both a summative and formative way.

### **Formative assessment**

The purpose of formative assessment is to:

- Capture the extent to which what has been taught has been learned.
- Inform teachers, allowing them to plan and adapt teaching to respond to the identified needs of students.
- Inform students about the key improvements they can make to achieve their learning potential.

There is no prescription about the frequency and methodology for formative assessment - it can and should take many forms at the teacher's discretion. Formative assessment should be accompanied by feedback to ensure maximum learning gains are made.

### **Summative assessment**

The purpose of summative assessment is to:

- Capture the extent to which what has been taught has been learned, informing teacher's decisions about where to go next with learning and how to adapt any future teaching of the content.
- Define a student's current attainment relating to a clearly defined set of criteria.

Assessment outcomes should be recorded on Go4Schools.

Student's attitude to learning will be assessed summarily, termly (three times per year), using our Red / Amber / Green assessment descriptors.

In years 7 – 9 student attainment will be assessed summarily, twice per year (in line with the assessment calendar) and reported using our Working towards / Working at / Working beyond descriptors. Assessments in years 7-9 are constructed with three tiers: *foundation, intermediate or higher*. Each tier corresponds to a prior attainment starting point.

<b>Assessment tier</b>	<b>Prior attainment band</b>	<b>KS2 combined</b>	<b>Mean SAS CAT range</b>
Foundation	Low	<99	<85
Intermediate	Mid	100 – 109	85 - 110
Higher	High	>110	>110

Students can move to an assessment tier with greater challenge but not to one of lesser challenge. Teachers are responsible for deciding, if and when, a student should progress through the assessment tiers. Records of assessment tiers and any changes should be kept on Go4Schools.

In years 10 – 13 students will be assessed summarily, at least twice per year (in line with the assessment calendar) and reported using grades relevant to the qualification being studied. Additionally, we will report a current working grade based on teacher professional judgement at the end of each term as a part of our regular reporting cycle. These gradings capture how securely a student is performing against qualification specific assessment objectives and performance descriptors.

Students with access arrangements should be afforded these access arrangements during formal summative assessments.

Parents and students will be able to access summative assessment information about their student via the annual reporting cycle, communicated via MCAS (My Child At School).

### **Feedback**

This section of the policy is informed by the [Education Endowment Foundation Teaching & Learning Toolkit: Feedback](#)

Feedback is information given to the learner about the learner's performance relative to learning goals or outcomes. It should aim to (and be capable of producing) improvement in students' learning. Student response to feedback is vital to the process of learning.

Feedback redirects or refocuses the learner's actions to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome. It can be about the output or outcome of the task, the process of the task, the student's management of their learning or self-regulation.



This feedback can be verbal or written or can be given through tests or via digital technology. It can come from a teacher or someone taking a teaching role, or from peers.

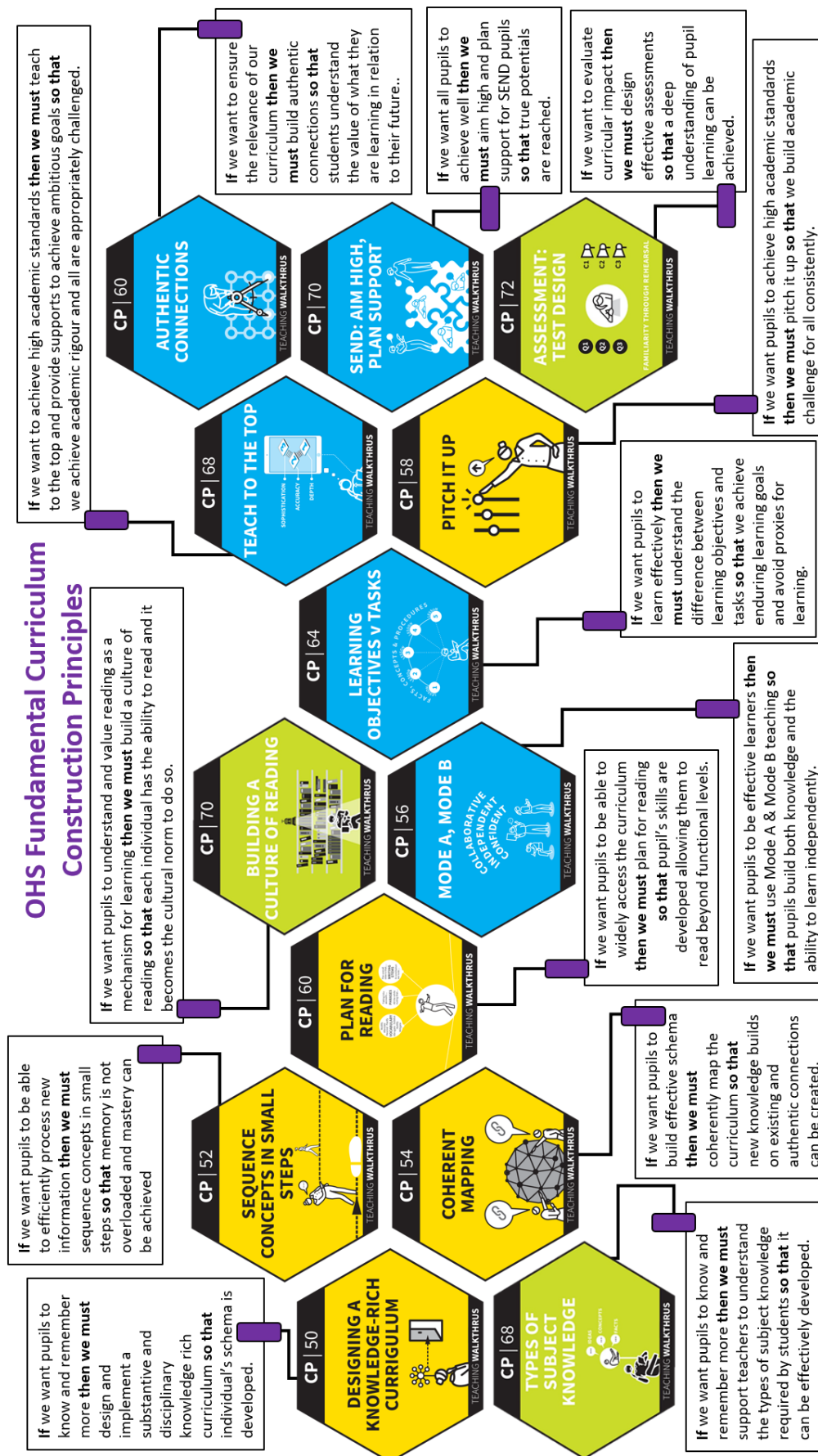
Education Endowment Foundation (2021)

Teachers should:

- Provide feedback to students regularly. Every student should receive formal formative (improvement focussed) actionable feedback (in any appropriate form) at least once per half term. Teachers are free to give feedback (by any means) more regularly. It is important to give feedback when things are correct -- not just when they are incorrect.
- Provide feedback that is actionable and be focussed on what a student can do to improve. Teachers are free to provide actionable feedback using any means that they deem to be impactful and results in evidentially improved learning.
- Provide high quality feedback that provides specific information on how to improve focussing on either the task, subject and / or self-regulation strategies.
- Support students to capitalise on all available opportunities to engage with and use provided feedback to further improve their work.
- Regularly review feedback provided and received and use this information to inform future teaching.

Parents should be provided with information about how their student is progressing via the published reporting cycle. This includes telephone contact weeks as well as the regular reporting of progress grades and attitudes to learning.

## OHS Fundamental Curriculum Construction Principles



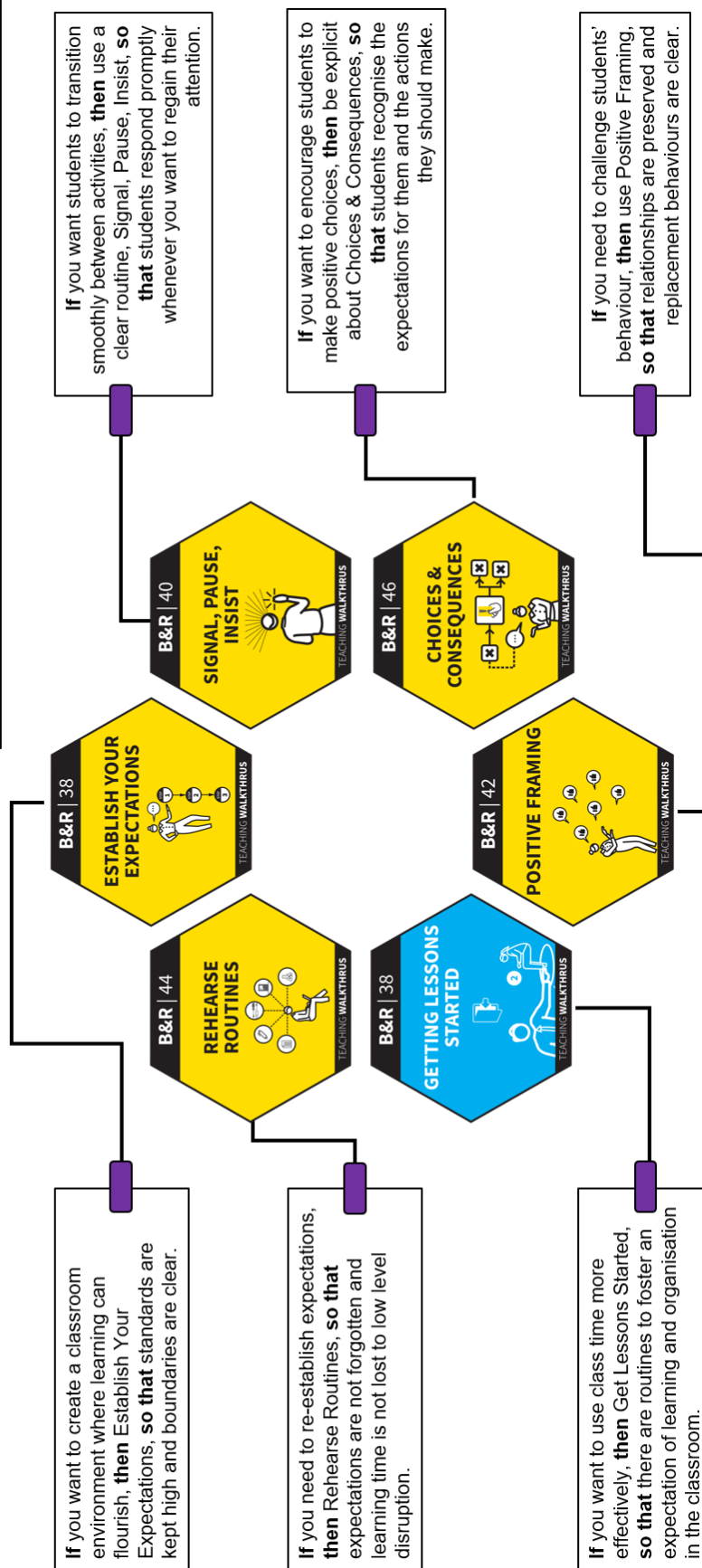


TEACHING  
**WALKTHRUS**

**CLUSTERS**

SERIES  
BEHAVIOUR &  
RELATIONSHIPS

- Present information clearly
- Promote appropriate discussion
- Work towards clearly defined end points
- Focus on the most important knowledge or concepts that students need to know





TEACHING  
**WALKTHRUS**

**CLUSTERS**

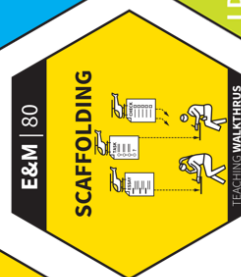
EXPLAINING &  
MODELLING  
SERIES

- Present information clearly
- Promote appropriate discussion
- Work towards clearly defined end points
- Focus on the most important knowledge or concepts that students need to know

If we want students to acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need **then we must** give effective explanations **so that** students benefit from teacher's expert subject knowledge.



If we want students to make progress and produce work of high quality **then we must** set the standards **so that** high expectations are communicated and worked towards.



If we want students to use knowledge fluently **then we must** use scaffolding and carefully remove it **so that** cognitive load is managed and student schema is developed.



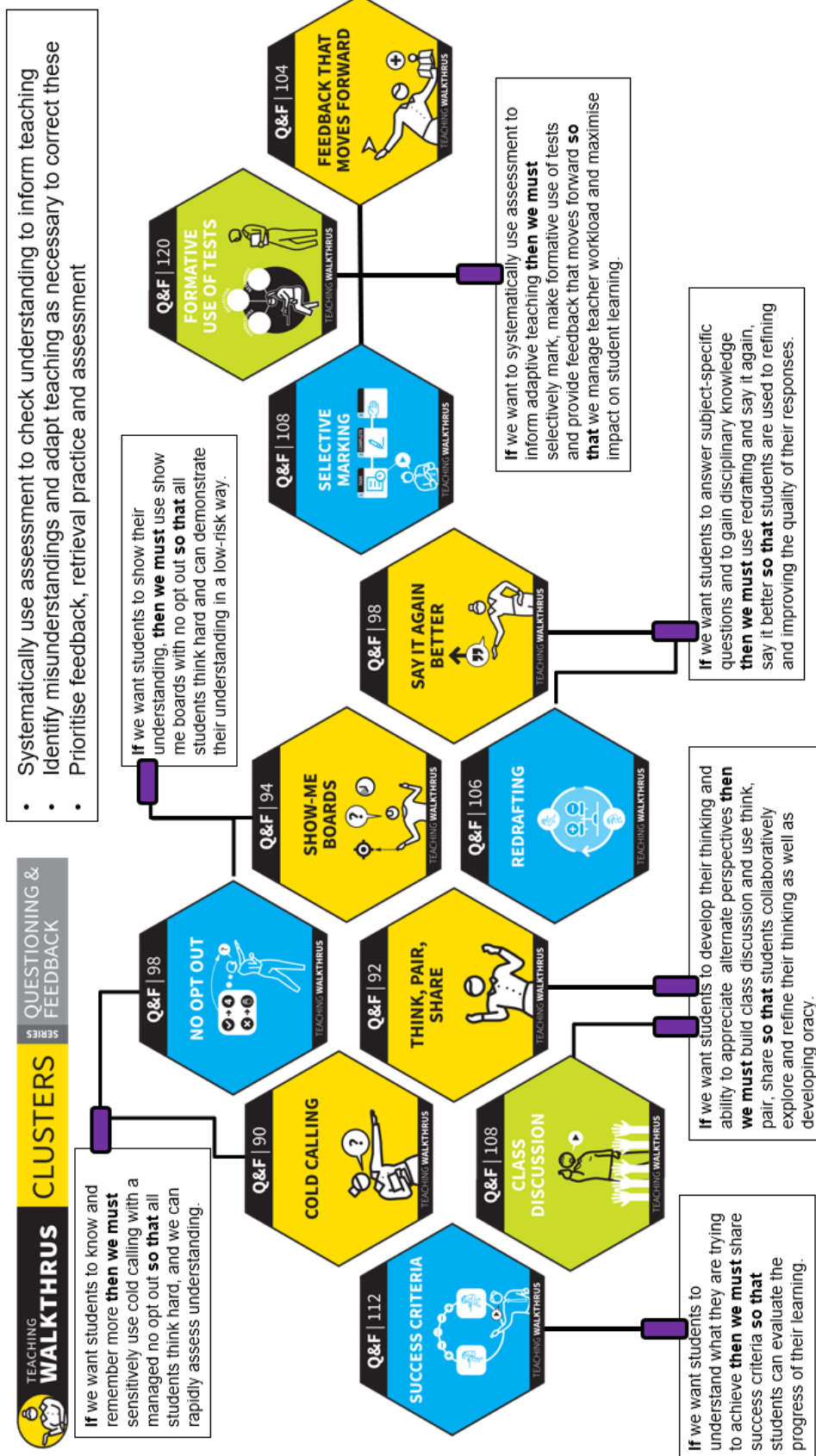
If we want students to acquire disciplinary knowledge **then we must support students to** predict and verify **so that** students can confirm and prove their understanding.



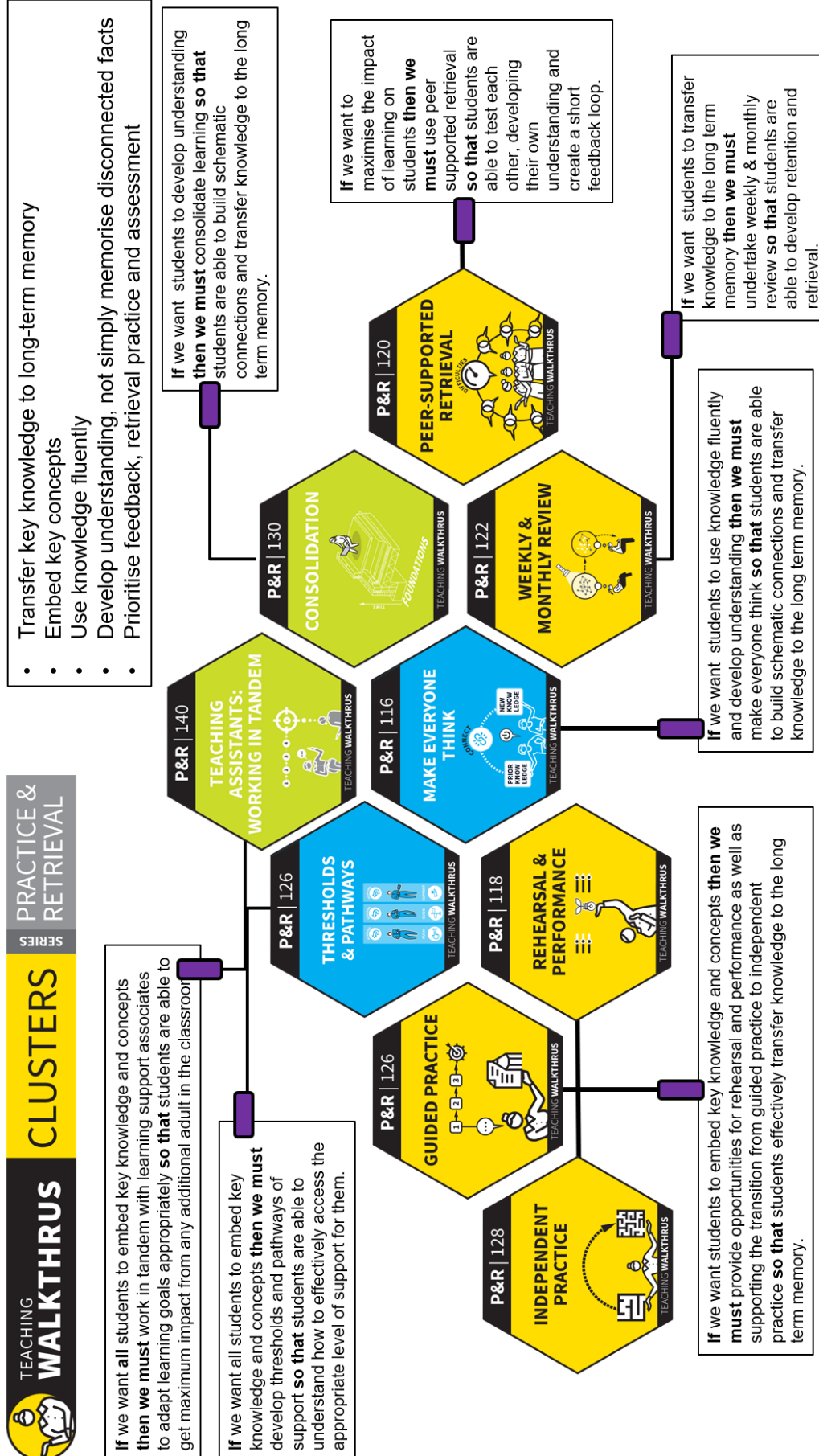
If we want students to read to an age-appropriate level and fluency **then we must** use whole class reading routines **so that** students are supported to access relevant material to learn from.



If we want students to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills **then we must** use modelling hand over **so that** students develop their knowledge and skills effectively.



- Systematically use assessment to check understanding to inform teaching
- Identify misunderstandings and adapt teaching as necessary to correct these
- Prioritise feedback, retrieval practice and assessment





TEACHING **WALKTHRU** CLUSTERS **MODE B** TEACHING SERIES

- Enable all to access lessons and learn
- Equip with the knowledge and cultural capital needed to succeed in life
- Develop positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues needed to flourish in our society
- Support readiness for the next phase of education, training or employment



If we want students to be able to efficiently process new information **then we must** keep it real; make authentic connections and make authentic products **so that** students are supported to be ready for the next phase of their training, education or employment.



If we want students to deepen their understanding and develop strong disciplinary knowledge **then we must** provide creative opportunities to experiment **so that** students are supported to develop a sense of agency and ownership over their learning.



If we want students to be able to efficiently process new information **then we must** design self directed learning opportunities **so that** students develop positive personal traits necessary to flourish in society. And be ready for their next steps.

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